



The Heart of the Matter

Heart attacks remain the number one killer of both adult men and women in the U.S. because most people are not prepared. Knowing the possible causes of heart disease lets us know if we are at risk. Being able to identify the symptoms can save your life or that of a friend, family member, or co-worker.

Consider the following risk factors to determine if you are at risk:

Physical

- † Age
- † Family history
- † High cholesterol (total cholesterol level is above 240 mg/dL)
- † High blood pressure (if it stays above 140/90 over time)
- † Diabetes or high blood sugar
- † Medical history (coronary artery disease, carotid artery)
- † Disease, stroke, abnormal heartbeat
- † Sedentary lifestyle
- † Excess body weight

Emotional/Environmental

- Stress
- Suppressed anger
- Smoking
- Anxiety
- Air pollution



According to the 2000 Surgeon General's Report, tobacco smoking remains the No. 1 cause of preventable disease and death in the United States.

Consider the following typical* symptoms:

Early symptoms (occurring intermittently over days giving the false impression that they would go away which is why patients do not seek early entry into the medical system):

- Central chest discomfort best described as an ache, pressure, tightness, squeezing or burning sensation or a feeling of fullness located in the center of the chest.
- Discomfort comes on with activity and is relieved by rest.
- Discomfort can persist for hours or days prior to a heart attack.
- Discomfort increases in frequency and intensity over time.

Late symptoms:

- Chest pain or any pain/tightness about the navel (the usual comparisons are the weight of an elephant's foot, a truck, or a vise-like grip.)
- Pain in arm, chest, throat, jaw, and/or back
- Numbness
- Shortness of breath for more than a few seconds
- Nausea for more than a few seconds and vomiting
- Weakness
- Pallor
- Profuse sweating
- Unconsciousness



Timing is crucial to survival and recovery.

ALWAYS
seek medical attention if
you think you are having
a heart attack!

**These are typical symptoms, experienced by 50% of heart attack victims- your symptoms could differ and vary in intensity from person to person.*